

## Michaud Leads Push to Support Recreational Trails Funding

Wednesday, July 22 2009

WASHINGTON, DC &ndash; Today, Congressman Mike Michaud sent a letter that he authored to the leadership of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee expressing strong support for the continuation and strengthening of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). In addition to Michaud, the letter was signed by a bipartisan group of 25 Members of Congress. Michaud is a member of the committee and a long time supporter of recreational trail funding. The full text of the letter and a list of cosigners are attached.

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&ldquo;The Recreational Trail Program has been invaluable to the continuing development and maintenance of Maine&rsquo;s vast trail network,&rdquo; said Michaud. &ldquo;Funds have been used for trails throughout Maine from Kittery to Fort Kent. But requests have consistently exceeded available funding each year. Because of that, many worthy trail projects have been delayed or downsized. Strong federal support will help make sure that our towns and cities have access to funding for trails, which have been an important part of the economic development of many Maine communities.&rdquo;

RTP, first created in the 1991 transportation bill (ISTEA), is administered by the Federal Highway Administration and is operated through state trail programs with the active involvement of diverse trail interests through mandated state trail advisory councils. The program has provided Maine with over four million dollars in federal funding in the past five years to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized use. This federal investment has been matched by two million dollars in local matches. The Bureau of Parks and Lands is the designated state agency responsible for administering the program. Grants can be awarded to non-profits, municipal agencies, state agencies and other governmental agencies (tribal governments and county governments).

Maine&rsquo;s extensive hiking, snowmobile, and ATV trail systems are used by Mainers and visitors alike. Trail projects like those supported by RTP help to promote economic development and jobs in communities tied together by these networks.

&ldquo;Reauthorization of the Recreational Trail Program is needed to continue to strengthen Maine&rsquo;s trail systems,&rdquo; said Michaud.

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July 22, 2009

Dear Chairman Oberstar, Ranking Member Mica, Chairman DeFazio, and Ranking Member Duncan:

We write to express our strong support for including the Recreational Trails Program in the Surface Transportation

Authorization Act of 2009. We applaud the committee leadership's action in providing for the continuation of this popular and effective program in the legislation marked up in the Highways and Transit Subcommittee on June 24, 2009.

Since its creation in the 1991 transportation bill (ISTEA), the Recreational Trails Program has helped Americans to be active and healthy, brought new economic vitality to communities across the nation, and unified often-divided trail interests to craft state trail plans and aid all trail interests. More than 20,000 projects have been funded under this program to date, including trail corridor purchases, trail construction and maintenance and environmental mitigation.

We further urge that the Surface Transportation Authorization Act provide adequate and fair funding levels for the program. Specifically, we request \$690 million over six years -- \$90 million in 2010, \$100 million in 2011, \$110 million in 2012, \$120 million in 2013, \$130 million in 2014, and \$140 million in 2015.

As you know the Recreational Trails Program is supported by taxes on fuel used in off-highway recreational vehicles. We request that \$2.5 million be allocated to a DOT study of off-highway recreational fuel use to ensure that the level of RTP funding truly reflects the federal fuel taxes paid for off-highway use. Finally, we ask that the funds allocated to the FHWA to administer the RTP each year be adjusted from a set amount to 1% of actual available annual funding to ensure that sufficient administrative resources are available for this valuable program.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,